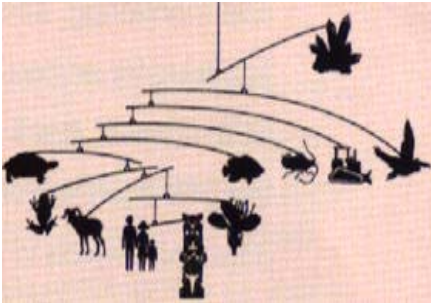




# **Health Impact Assessment: A Tool to Advance Health Equity and Environmental Justice**

**2007 CCHLO Spring Conference  
Rajiv Bhatia, MD, MPH**

# HIA asks the common sense question: How do public decisions affect our health?



## Health Impact Assessment

- Predicts the effects of decision alternatives on health and the distribution of health
- Involves affected stakeholders in assessment and decision-making
- Informs and influences a social decision



# Healthy Public Policy is an Old but Unrealized Idea

- Health promotion ... puts health on the agenda of policy makers in all sectors and at all levels, directing them to be aware of the health consequences of their decisions and to accept their responsibilities for health.

*WHO OTTAWA CHARTER ON HEALTH PROMOTION 1986*

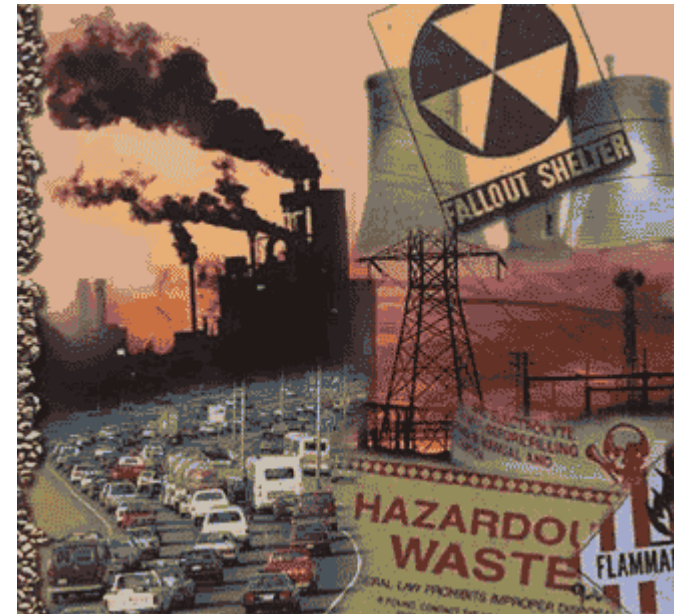


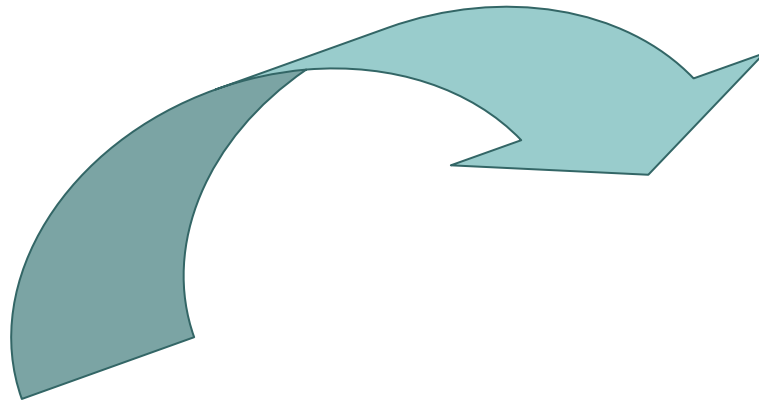
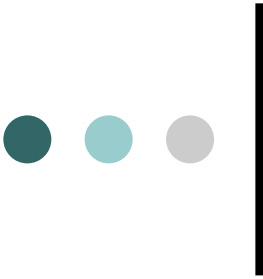
# HIA is a required part of the Environmental Impact Assessment

- A lead agency shall find that a project may have a significant effect on the environment and thereby require an EIR to be prepared for the project where there is substantial evidence...that...the environmental effects of a project will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. § 15065(a)
- An EIR shall discuss “health and safety problems caused by the physical changes” that the proposed project will precipitate. § 15126.2, (a)

# Environmental Justice and Health Impact Assessment

- Federal agencies are required by law to identify and address adverse health effects of programs, policies, and activities on low income and minority populations
- Environmental justice is a California state policy





**Highway Development,  
Suburban Sprawl, and  
White Flight**

# **Land Use Policies Produce Health Inequities**

**Segregation, Benign  
Neglect and Urban  
Renewal**

**Disinvestment and  
Fiscal Crisis**



**Unemployment,  
Poverty, Community  
Violence, and Poor  
Health**



**Structural  
Inequities and  
Racism**

# Trinity Plaza Apartments



- Developer proposed to demolish 360 unit rent-controlled apartments to build 1400 condominiums
- City found that the project had no adverse impacts
- Coalition challenged City to consider human impacts from stress, loss of family and friend support, and moving to poor quality housing
- HIA documented adverse health effects forcing City to require study or mitigations
- Developer negotiated with tenants to provide replacement housing at current rents

# Oak to Ninth Avenue



- Proposed new neighborhood on Oakland waterfront – 3000+ units of housing and commercial space
- Plan replaced previous community plans to develop a regional waterfront destination
- Plan did not provide for walking or bicycling to schools or transit
- Project created new traffic hazards for nearby Chinatown
- Residents anticipated to have poor air quality and high noise levels
- HIA analyzed issues and proposed mitigations
- Concessions with regards to parks and onsite affordable housing
- Project challenged by open space and historic preservation groups



# Healthy Development Measurement Tool



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Examples](#)[Use the Tool](#)[The Tool](#) » Use the Tool

## Use the Tool

Start using the tool by clicking on one of the elements below, or [browse a Master List](#) of all the Tool components, including elements, objectives, and indicators. Visit [Tool Application Resources](#) for additional information to help conduct your application. Also, visit our [Demographics and Health Outcomes Data](#) to obtain baseline information on your community.

[Environmental Stewardship](#)[Sustainable and Safe Transportation](#)[Public Safety](#)[Public Infrastructure/Access to Goods and Services](#)[Adequate and Healthy Housing](#)[Healthy Economy](#)[Community Participation](#)

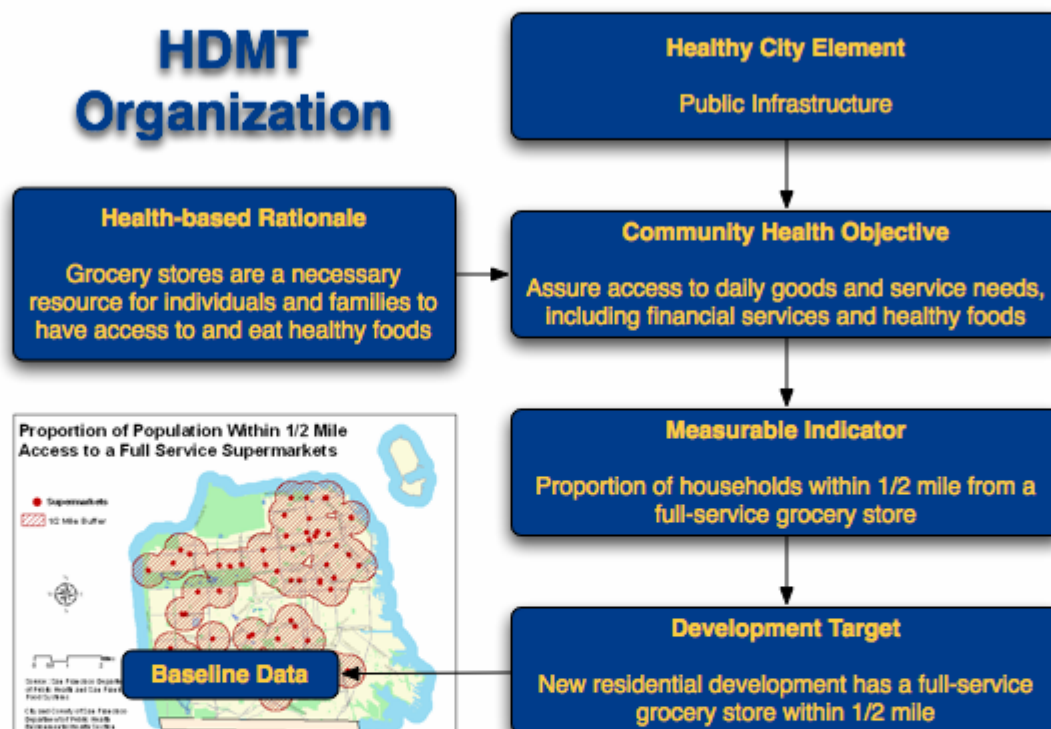
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# [www.TheHDMT.org](http://www.TheHDMT.org)

# HDMT Organization



In this section, you can see:

- How to **Apply the Tool**
- **Preliminary Steps** in applying the Tool
- How to do a **Step-by-Step Application** of the Tool
- Several Tool **Application Examples**
- Start to **Use the Tool**



# The Value of HIA

- Comprehensive way to examine health issues and trade-offs in decision-making
- Increases policy maker and public understanding of health and policy relationships
- Supports community engagement
- Legitimizes “unheard” community voices
- Improves project/plan/policy design
- Builds new relationships and partnerships

# Growth and Development: Dilemmas and Opportunities for Health and Equity

1. Will land use development improve environmental quality in core urban areas?
2. Will development bring infrastructure and investment to address health disparities?
3. Will infill displace low-income and ethnic minorities and increase residential segregation?



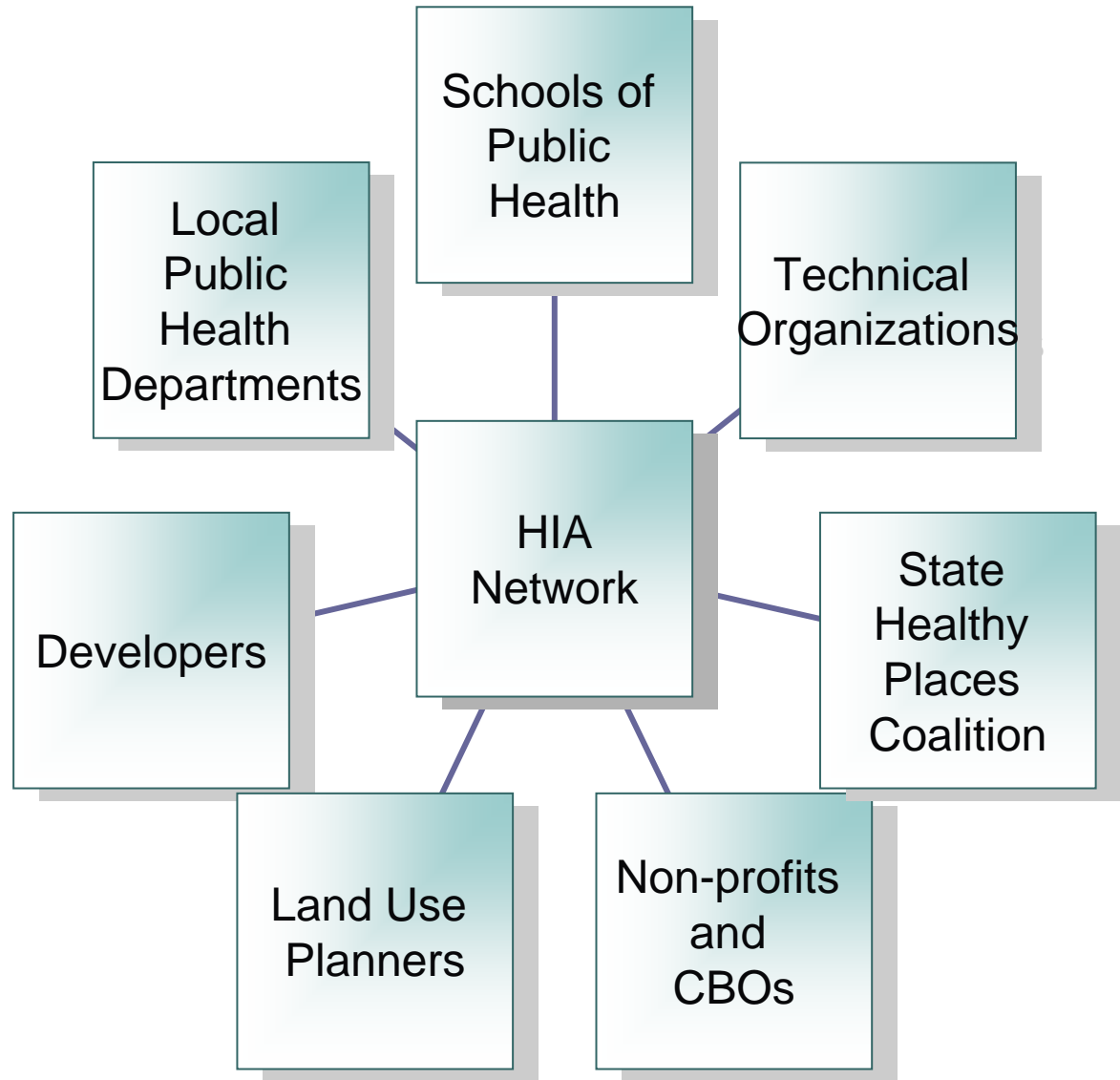


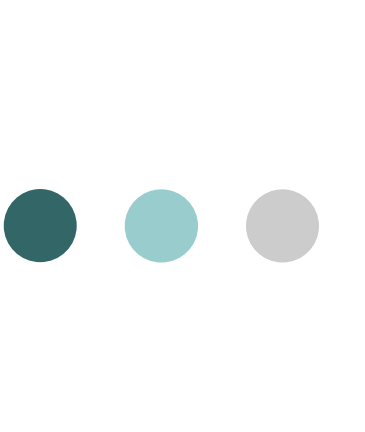
# Local Impacts of ENCHIA

- Enhanced focus of planning on comprehensive needs
- SFDPH and DCP applying HDMT to San Francisco Neighborhood Plans
- Research by SFDPH health impacts forecasting tools
- SFDPH advising Western SoMa Community Planning
- CALTRANS funds SFDPH and Bike Coalition to develop walkability & bikability plan for Treasure Island
- Noise and air quality specialist Tom Rivard working with PODER to do a noise, air quality and pedestrian injury assessment in the Mission
- SFDPH and DCP integrating pedestrian safety, noise, and air quality assessments in CEQA process.



# Growing A California HIA Network





## AB 1472 (Leno): The California Healthy Places Act

The California Healthy Places Act would charge the California Department of Public Health to provide guidance, technical assistance, and grants to local public health agencies and community organizations that want to evaluate land-use planning decisions to ensure that they create the optimum conditions for community health.



# Lessons Learned

- Learning the Language
- Finding our Voice
- Exploring New Relationships
- Developing the Science
- Being Flexible





# Where can HIA be used outside of land use?

- Transportation: speed limits, pedestrian safety
- Labor: living wages, sick day benefits
- Agriculture: farm subsidies
- Natural Resources: dam construction, oil drilling
- Politics: campaign finance



# Acknowledgements

**SFDPH HIA Team:** Lili Farhang; Cyndy Comerford; Megan Gaydos; Shireen Malekafazali; Jennifer McLaughlin; Megan Wier

**UC Berkeley HIA Group:** Tom Rivard; Edmund Seto

**Human Impact Partners:** Jonathan Heller

**Community Partners (Partial List):** Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition; South of Market Community Action Network; Visitation Valley CDC; West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project; San Francisco Bicycle Coalition



# Web Resources for HIA

SF Department of Public Health

- [www.sfdph.org/phes/](http://www.sfdph.org/phes/)

UC Berkeley HIA Course

- <http://ehs.sph.berkeley.edu/hia/>

Healthy Development Measurement Tool

- [www.TheHDMT.org](http://www.TheHDMT.org)



# The HIA Process

<b>Screening</b>	Understand the policy/plan and its alternatives, judge the breadth and magnitude of health effects, examine the strength of the evidence, gather available analysis, understand stakeholder positions, consider equity effects, and consider the potential for improvements
<b>Scoping:</b>	Identify health pathways, research questions, research methods, data sources, and mitigation strategies
<b>Appraisal:</b>	Review documents, conduct field visits and gather field measures/data, gather secondary data, conduct map analyses, and apply quantitative forecasting
<b>Reporting</b>	Write structured report with findings, submit comment letters (e.g., EIR), hold stakeholder meetings to share findings, and, provide public testimony
<b>Monitoring:</b>	Assess response to comments and reports, review media coverage, stakeholder and decision-maker statements, and, assess changes in plan/project/policy decisions deriving from HIA analysis